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UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL CORDOVEZ' STATEMENT ON CONCLUSION OF NEGOTIATIONS  
ON SITUATION RELATING TO AFGHANISTAN, GENEVA, 8 APRIL

I should like to announce that the instruments which will comprise the settlement are now finalized and open for signature. These instruments are the following - and I am now going to use the formal titles which were agreed upon:

-- Bilateral agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Principles of Mutual Relations, in particular on Non-interference and Non-intervention;

-- Bilateral agreement between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Voluntary Return of Refugees;

-- Declaration of International Guarantees;

-- Agreement on the Interrelationships for the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan. A memorandum of understanding on the monitoring arrangements which will be provided by the United Nations has been incorporated into the Agreement on the Interrelationships.

I will be keeping you informed about all the arrangements which will be made for the signature of the instruments. One of the points on which we have not yet reached an agreement is the date, because this involves a number of logistical questions. Given the time difference and all that we will try to have a date this afternoon. The instruments will be signed not later than the 14th of April. The 14th has been mentioned, the 12th has been mentioned, the 11th has been mentioned. The 13th has not been mentioned -- for obvious reasons.

I am authorized at this time to state that "throughout the negotiations, it has been consistently recognized that the objective of a comprehensive settlement implies the broadest support and immediate participation of all segments of the Afghan people and that this can best be ensured by a broad-based Afghan Government. It was equally recognized that any questions relating to the Government in Afghanistan are matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of Afghanistan and can only be decided by the Afghan people

(more)

themselves. The hope was therefore expressed that all elements of the Afghan nation, living inside and outside Afghanistan, would respond to this historic opportunity. At this crucial stage, all concerned will therefore promote the endeavours of the Afghan people to work out arrangements for a broad-based Government and will support and facilitate that process."

That is the end of the statement that I have been authorized to read at this time. We will have copies for you, as well as -- anticipating questions -- the text in French and, of course, in Spanish.

I should like to add a few personal comments.

Some of you have been with me throughout the almost six years of these negotiations and have witnessed some of the frustrations that we have suffered. But at the same time, it has of course been for me a very rewarding, indeed an unforgettable experience. I say this only to make one specific point. And that is that I am absolutely convinced that all concerned have been trying to work out not just any agreement but in fact the best possible agreement. What we have tried during these long years is to draft -- with great care, with great caution and with great persistence -- an agreement which will effectively serve the purpose of assisting the Afghan people to bring about an end to their suffering.

It is not a perfect settlement, because it was worked out by human beings. Precisely for that reason, however, I believe that it is a settlement which reflects the reality of the situation. The test of this settlement will come in its implementation and therefore I hope that it will be given a chance. [It is very easy to criticize, and I once said to somebody that, given the opportunity, I would, myself, be able to criticize it thoroughly. I sometimes wonder, however, if those who so readily criticize would be able -- given the enormous difficulties that we faced -- to achieve the kind of understandings that were needed to work out these instruments.] The fact that we were able to overcome such enormous difficulties make me quite hopeful that the problems that will be undoubtedly encountered in the implementation of this settlement will also be overcome.

I sincerely believe that this settlement provides to the Afghan people an historic opportunity to achieve peace. I am sure that the Afghan people will use this opportunity with a sense of responsibility and with a sense of urgency. There are voices from Afghans who have criticized this process. But I am absolutely convinced that now that a settlement has been reached -- particularly when the possibilities that it opens up are examined -- the Afghans themselves will realize that at Geneva we have established solid foundations for the achievement of normal living conditions in their homeland. The Afghan people deserve peace and these negotiations were conducted to fulfil the aspirations which have been voiced over too many years.

This settlement will also improve relationships and security in the region. This is extremely important because there are many other regional conflicts which are very seriously damaging the efforts to promote the well-being of the people of the third world. The solution of this conflict

should be followed by equally determined attempts to solve other regional conflicts. The settlement will also improve the whole atmosphere of world affairs and that is, of course, something that the international community has repeatedly called for.

I know that this settlement has been negotiated in good faith, that it will be signed in good faith and that it will be implemented in good faith. All concerned are aware, and indeed very conscious of its purpose -- which is to bring peace to Afghanistan. There is no doubt therefore that they will exercise restraint in taking any action which might be deemed to be at variance with both the letter and the spirit of this settlement. Inasmuch as the settlement is designed to bring peace to Afghanistan, the conditions for such a peace could not be attained if actions were to be taken to fuel hostilities. The Afghans are tired of hostilities and they don't want any more suffering.

Let me say just one final word. The kind of work that we have done requires, on the side of the Secretariat, an outstanding team. There is one person who is, of course, more visible and that is the person who is publicly praised or criticized. But I must now express, from the bottom of my heart, my very deep appreciation to my colleagues who have worked with me during these negotiations. I will mention them in no particular order: Hisako Shimura, who is unfortunately not here today; Giandomenico Picco, Raymond Sommereyns, Cathy Szlamp and Wilma Gibson.

Thank you all for your co-operation.

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